

**House Report 106-756 - TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE, AND GENERAL
GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2001**

**ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF HON. STENY H. HOYER, HON.
CARRIE P. MEEK, HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, AND
HON. DAVID R. OBEY**

We cannot support this bill not because of what is included in the bill, but because of what is left out: \$2.1 billion in critically needed activities and projects throughout the United States that are the Federal Government's responsibility. The 302(b) spending allocation for fiscal year 2001 for this bill is \$2.1 billion below the requested level. Chairman Kolbe was faced with very difficult choices in order to mark up a bill within this level of funding, and we wish to express our appreciation to Chairman Kolbe and the subcommittee staff for the constructive way in which the subcommittee has operated this year.

Chairman Kolbe has decided to fund law enforcement functions at the expense of the other general government responsibilities this subcommittee has. For example, Treasury's law enforcement bureaus are funded at or near the Administration's request, including funding for additional ATF agents to enforce our gun laws, funding to begin development of the U.S. Customs Service automated commercial system while maintaining their current system, and funding to continue the Secret Service workload balancing initiative. We applaud the robust funding for Treasury's important law enforcement bureaus.

The problem is money: the allocation for this bill is not adequate to fund Federal Government responsibilities that are critical to the American people. The Chairman acknowledges this funding problem with these statements in this Report on pages 4 and 5, 'With these * * * responsibilities in mind, the allocation is short by approximately \$1.3 billion.' and 'The Committee acknowledges that IRS, GSA, and the National Archives have borne the brunt of the restraint on spending found in the bill, requiring denial of requested increases for the upcoming year.' The Administration acknowledges the funding crisis in this bill with a veto threat.

This is not the only bill which is 'short;' several other appropriation bills are already facing veto threats from the President because of spending amounts that are inadequate to serve the American people. The Republicans are using this strategy in order to push their tax cut agenda--one that will cost \$175 billion over five years, and a \$1 trillion over ten years. Are our national priorities so out of whack that we're willing to sacrifice our responsibility to fund core government functions on the altar of irresponsible tax cuts? The majority party apparently thinks so.

Last year, they pushed their huge tax cut through Congress, even though it could have put at risk the healthiest economy in our lifetimes. This year, they're back with equally irresponsible tax cuts. That's what this funding cut of \$2.1 billion in core government functions is all about--funding tax cuts that would benefit the wealthiest among us. All of these vital programs face the budget ax because the Republican Party would rather pass tax-cuts than invest in our nation's future. We must bring our national priorities back into focus.

In this bill we must have adequate funding not only for important law enforcement functions but also for the Federal Government's responsibilities to construct Federal Courthouses and other Government buildings, to collect taxes from the American people efficiently and effectively, and to provide for the functioning of the Government, ensuring that records are not lost in a National Archives building that has become a firetrap.

This bill underfunds the Internal Revenue Service by \$466 million, the General Services Administration including courthouse and other government construction and repair projects by over \$1 billion, and the National Archives by \$108 million. These cuts are devastating and fiscally irresponsible.

Two years ago the House voted overwhelmingly for the IRS Reform and Restructuring Act. That act followed recommendations of the Commission that studied the IRS, which stated concerning budgets that `the

IRS should receive stable funding for the next three years so that the leaders can undertake the proper planning to rebuild its foundation' and `furthermore, a stable budget will allow the IRS leadership to plan and implement operations which will improve taxpayer service and compliance.' And now the Republican Majority is cutting funding for the IRS even below current services level. We can't have it both ways. This cut of \$466 million will jeopardize IRS's ability to reorganize, protect taxpayer rights and improve taxpayer service. This level would not even cover mandatory inflation resulting in a loss of almost 5000 FTE's; successful completion of the 2001 filing season would be at risk; customer service would be reduced; audit coverage would decline to all time record low levels (reducing revenue to the government by up to \$2 billion); and the modernization of the IRS, its computer systems and business practices would be threatened.

In a recent letter, IRS Commissioner Charles Rossotti stated the following concerning the impact of this funding reduction: `It would stop the IRS modernization effort, as mandated by the Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 (RRA 98), would also lead to a further decline in the already low levels of compliance activity, and would lock the IRS into its 30 year old technology.'

The General Services Administration funding for its government-wide construction and building repair activities has been reduced by over \$1 billion

in order to fit this bill within the low allocation. And delaying for one year the requested construction projects will cost the taxpayer almost \$100 million in additional inflationary construction costs and extended lease costs. This hardly seems like the fiscally responsible course of funding.

No funding is provided for courthouse or other construction projects requested by the Administration. We have a serious crisis going on across the country in terms of our federal courthouses. We have spent billions of dollars over the last 10MD14MD14-15 years on the war against drugs and crime resulting in a hefty increase in the Judiciary's caseload. The number of judges and court employees has grown substantially; however, our court facilities have not even come close to keeping pace with this growth. This lack of space has created delays, inefficiencies, and large backlogs of cases. Moreover, security is insufficient to protect those who work in and utilize the court facilities. Current facilities have critical security concerns, including life-threatening security deficiencies documented by the U.S. Marshals Service in some cases. These conditions are simply unacceptable to U.S. taxpayers; nevertheless, this bill funds no courthouse construction projects, effectively ignoring the critical workload and security concerns of the U.S. Courts.

In addition, we object to the assumption on courtroom sharing in the President's request for funding for courthouse construction, based on OMB's unilateral, 'one size fits all' plan that only two courtrooms should be built for every three judges. We could not determine the basis for OMB's proposed courtroom sharing plan and are concerned about the impact that the reductions in courtrooms would have on the administration of justice, particularly in Miami and Los Angeles. No one with significant federal court case management experience was involved in OMB's decision to limit courtrooms in new courthouse projects to two courtrooms for every three judges. The sheer number of cases, the number of large multi-party defendant cases, and the complexity of various cases must be considered when determining whether courtroom sharing is feasible in a particular location.

All other construction projects are zeroed out in this bill, including among others the continuation of the Food and Drug Administration Consolidation project, the new Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Headquarters in a secure location, and the renovation of our National Archives.

We have been made aware that the threat of fire in the National Archives building is high. Delaying this project will put the lives of visitors and staff at risk and endanger irreplaceable archival records, including the Charters of Freedom as long as they remain on display in the unrenovated building. Delaying this project will cost the taxpayers millions of dollars in added costs. Some members might agree that this rises to the level of a funding emergency.

We have many other concerns about unfunded programs in this bill, including the irresponsible lack of funding for Presidential transition expenses, a 32% cut in critically needed funding for Repairs of Federal buildings, no funding for the ongoing information technology enhancement programs (including computer security staffing) in the Executive Office of the President and the IRS, lack of funding for the Unanticipated Needs of the President and for \$2.5 million for clarification of the options for a Puerto Rican referendum. In addition, the bill eliminates \$77 million in requested funding for counterterrorism and funding for the President's critical infrastructure protection initiative that would ensure the Federal Government is protected from acts of cyber-terrorism. These and other unfunded programs are Federal responsibilities on which the American taxpayer depends.

We wish to correct misleading statements from the Committee markup concerning reports on the First Lady's travel. The White House is required by this Committee to submit monthly reports on the 15th of each month following the preceding month on the First Lady's travel. Normally reports involving general ledger accounting in the Executive Branch require 32 to 41 days to produce after the reporting period is complete. In its June 26, 2000 report to Congress, the White House report reflects that the First Lady travel bills, on average, were paid within 32 days of the date of the trip. The July 15, 2000 report indicates that bills, on average, were paid within 31 days of the trip. Finally, it was incorrectly stated that the First Lady uses the 747 aircraft for travel. The First Lady only boards the 747 as a passenger accompanying the President of the United States.

For these and other reasons, we cannot support this FY 2001 Treasury-Postal Service-General Government Appropriation bill. We continue to hope that additional funding will be restored to this bill to enable responsible funding of core government functions.

Lucille Roybal-Allard.
Steny H. Hoyer.
Dave Obey.
Carrie P. Meek.